**News Release**

Santa Cruz County Clerk/Elections

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**Ballots and Voter Guides are in the mail for the March 3 Election**

More than 115,000 ballots have been mailed to the county’s 161,680 registered voters for the March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election. The county Voter Information Guides have also been mailed to all voters.

Santa Cruz County Clerk Gail Pellerin urges voters to open their ballots as soon as they get them to make sure they have the ballot they want to vote.

“In a Presidential Primary, your political party registration will determine which ballot you get to vote,” Pellerin said. “If you look at your ballot, and it does not contain the Presidential candidate of your choice, we can easily fix it so you can vote in the primary you want.”

Voters who are registered with a political party, will receive a ballot with that party’s candidates who are seeking the Presidential nomination. Voters who are registered nonpartisan, declined to state, independent, or with a party that is not qualified, are considered no party preference voters. Under the law, the parties decided if no party preference voters can cross over and vote in their Presidential Primary. Three of the six parties allow no party preference voters to vote their party ballot: Democratic, American Independent and Libertarian. No party preference voters who are voting by mail must request the party ballot they want, or if they vote at the polls they can ask the poll worker for the ballot of their choice.

“If voters get a nonpartisan ballot without the office of President, no worries,” Pellerin said. “We can easily send you a second ballot from one of the three parties who allow crossovers or help you re-register with the party you want.”

To request a vote-by-mail ballot, voters can do one of the following:

* Go online to [www.votescount.com](http://www.votescount.com) and fill out the online application
* Call our office at 831-454-2060, or
* Complete the application that can be found on the back cover of the county Voter Information Guide that has been mailed to voters and either bring it in or FAX it to 831-454-2445.

Vote-by-mail ballot applications are also available at the City Clerk’s Offices in Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, and Watsonville. The deadline to request a ballot be mailed to you is February 25.

Early voting at the County Clerk/Elections Department in Santa Cruz and the Watsonville City Clerk’s Office at 275 Main Street, 4th Floor, continues to be available during regular weekday hours from 8am to 5pm. In addition to the regular business hours, the offices will offer weekend voting on Saturday, February 29 and Sunday, March 1,from 9am to 5pm.

Voters may return their ballot by mail or they may drop it off in one of the convenient drive-up drop boxes until 8pm, Tuesday, March 3. The drop boxes are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, no postage required. Drop box locations are:

* Santa Cruz - 701 Ocean St in front of the County Government Center
* Santa Cruz – 212 Church St in the public parking lot
* Capitola – 420 Capitola Ave in the City Hall parking lot
* Scotts Valley – 1 Civic Center Dr in the City Hall parking lot
* Watsonville – 316 Rodriguez St in the municipal public parking lot 14
* Watsonville – 1432 Freedom Blvd parking lot
* UCSC Quarry Plaza
* Aptos - Cabrillo College Parking lot R by the stadium
* Felton Covered Bridge Park – at Mt. Hermon and Graham Hill Rd
* Ben Lomond - Highlands Park, 8500 Highway 9

Voters may also drop their voted ballot off at any polling place in Santa Cruz County on Election Day. A list of polling places can be found online at [www.votescount.com](http://www.votescount.com). In addition, voters may return their voted ballot during regular business hours to the County Clerk/Elections Department in Santa Cruz, or the City Clerks' offices in Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley or Watsonville during regular business hours.

Ballots hand delivered or dropped off must be received by an elections official in the State of California no later than 8pm on March 3, 2020.

Ballots mailed must be signed on the envelope, dated, and postmarked on or before March 3 and received in the mail by the elections official no later than the 3rd day after the election, which is Friday, March 6.

Voters are advised that mail delivery can take anywhere from 3 to 7 days or more.

It is extremely important for voters to sign their vote-by-mail ballot return envelope in their own handwriting, in addition to printing their name, dating the envelope, writing their address where they live in Santa Cruz County, and providing a phone number or email if we need to contact the voter.

Unfortunately, if there is no signature on the vote-by-mail ballot return envelope or if the signature on the envelope does not compare to the voter’s signature on his or her voter’s registration card, elections officials cannot count the ballot. Under a new law, voters have until March 27 to cure a signature.

After February 25, voters may still obtain a ballot in person at the Santa Cruz County Clerk/Elections Department and Watsonville City Clerk’s Office.

There will also be an additional 8 voter service centers set up the following days and times:
9am to 5pm, Saturday & Sunday
8am to 5pm, Monday
7am to 8pm on Tuesday, Election Day

• Simpkins Family Swim Center – 979 17th Ave, Santa Cruz

• UCSC Bay Tree Conference Center – Quarry Plaza

• Capitola City Hall – Community Room, 420 Capitola Ave, Capitola

• Community Foundation – 7807 Soquel Dr, Aptos

• Santa Cruz County Behavioral Health – 1430 Freedom Blvd, Watsonville

• Pajaro Valley Community Conference Room – 85 Neilson St, Watsonville

• Scotts Valley Skypark Classroom – 361 Kings Village Rd, Scotts Valley

• Zayante Fire Protection District – 7700 E. Zayante Rd, Felton

If voters are unable to come in and obtain a ballot personally during the six days before and including Election Day, they may provide a written statement allowing an authorized representative of the voter to obtain the ballot on the voter’s behalf.

If any voter requires assistance with voting or needs a ballot delivered to them, please contact the Santa Cruz County Clerk/Elections Department and arrangements can be made.

For more information, please call the Santa Cruz County Clerk/Elections Department at 831-454-2060, 1-866-282-5900 (toll-free), or visit our website at [www.votescount.com](http://www.votescount.com).

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